



- OFFICE OF THE MAYOR -
Chasity Wells-Armstrong
City of Kankakee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 5, 2020

Mayor Chasity Wells-Armstrong
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INDICTMENT OF RICHARD G. SIMMS
PAST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF KRMA
PAST DIRECTOR OF KANKAKEE'S
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES UTILITY (ESU)

August 4, 2020 is a sad day for the City of Kankakee. A federal grand jury indicted former employee and consultant, Richard G. Simms, of fraud by illegally taking over 2.2 million dollars from KRMA (\$768,000) and ESU (\$1,257,000) over a four (4) year timeframe, beginning in March, 2014. The details are set forth in the attached release from the Department of Justice, United States Attorney John C. Milhiser.

Mayor Chasity Wells-Armstrong, shortly after being elected Mayor in April, 2017, questioned the \$66,000 a month payments from the City and KRMA to Simms. Richard Simms began his tenure with the City and KRMA prior to Mayor Wells-Armstrong's election as Alderman in 2015 and Mayor in 2017. Prior to the questioning by Mayor Wells-Armstrong, the City's longtime Corporation Counsel, Chris Bohlen, was in charge of the legal affairs of the City of Kankakee, including the innerworkings of KRMA and ESU. After an extensive investigation by Mayor Wells-Armstrong and her team, Simms payments were stopped, ending his employment with the City and KRMA. Not only was Bohlen the City Attorney representing the City when Simms began his fraudulent schemes in March, 2014, he has now been representing Simms in a suit against the City in an effort to collect on his last two (2) invoices. Mayor Wells-Armstrong refused to pay his invoices because no answers were forthcoming from Simms that justified the compensation he was charging both entities.

The City has countersued Simms for the 1.5 million dollars he received from the City but has been placed in an awkward legal position due to the former City Attorney's representation of Simms. Mayor Wells-Armstrong's diligent pursuit of the questionable payments to Simms, as well as bringing the issues to the U.S. Attorney, has led to the Department of Justice's inquiry and the U.S. Attorney's charges against Simms.

The City will continue to pursue its civil action against Simms to recover the money that was paid to him and his firm. Mayor Wells-Armstrong said, "His payments were immediately questioned by me, but no adequate answers were received, so the payments were stopped, ending his employment with the City and KRMA." The Indictment was released today and is attached to this statement.

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